



State Senator

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VALDE GARCIA

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COFFEE BREAK NEWS

Sen. Garcia teams with legislators to establish bipartisan Bureau of Fire Services

In an effort to increase safety for Michigan citizens, Senator Garcia teamed with legislators from both chambers this week to unveil a bipartisan package of legislation that would consolidate fire fighting resources into the newly established Bureau of Fire Services.

The 25 bill package of legislation is designed to establish a bureau that would combine all aspects of fire protection that has been fragmented and scattered over the years to various areas of the government. Senator Garcia was the primary co-sponsor of the main bill in this package, Senate Bill 1133, which would establish the Bureau of Fire Services as an autonomous agency within the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG). SB 1133 would also transfer the powers and duties of the State Fire Marshall to the newly created office. The office would include the state's Fire Marshall, Fire Fighter Training Council, Fire Safety Board and any other agency, board or commission designated as a part of the bureau.

The legislation follows Executive Directive NO. 2005-10 issued last November by Governor Granholm to consolidate resources and strengthen Michigan's emergency management and homeland security efforts.

Sen. Garcia introduced SB 1140 and 1144 in the package, which would reflect the transfer of PA 9 of 1942 (Firefighters Compensation Act) and PA 456 of 1988 (Immunity of Instructors) as statutory changes under the new legislation.

Senate passes graduation requirement plan

The Michigan Senate approved legislation this week that puts Michigan at the forefront of education, ensuring students leave school with a first-rate education and ready for the 21st century, by creating rigorous statewide high-school graduation requirements.

Senate Bill 1124 will require students to take four years, or equivalent credit, of English and math; three of science and social studies; and one year of an arts course as well as a health and physical-education course. Additionally, students will have to take biology, geometry and Algebra I and II, among other specific course requirements.

The Michigan House of Representatives has offered an alternative graduation-requirement plan. One key difference between the House and Senate plan is that senators backed a two-year foreign-language requirement that could be fulfilled anytime between kindergarten and graduation.

Lawmakers will now begin working out the differences between the Senate and House versions.